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- 136 many of the places where game of all kinds was plentiful in his father's time. Every Maria has his bow and arrow, the population has multiplied, and miles of jungle have been beaten annually for game in the great spring hunts. Wild buffalo and bison had been [224] so reduced in numbers that they were declared protected thirty years ago, and heavy fines have been imposed for shooting them. The supply of bison-horns is thus not equal to the demand, and the head-dress is therefore a highly prized hereditary possession. 535 No one should try to buy them from their owners; if a specimen is needed, the collector should provide the horns and other materials and see it made up for him. 292 Bison-horns being now rare, and obtainable only from a bison found dead or by purchase from the State Forest Department, various substitutes are being used, such as domestic bullocks' or small buffaloes' horns, wild boars' tushes, the long beaks of the hornbill, and, occasionally, the antlers of the spotted deer (*Cervus axis*). [326] The most interesting substitutes are brass patterned horns, of the shape and size of bison-horns, made by the *cire-perdue* process by the local Gharwa (Ghasia) brass workers.

Except occasional dancing anklets of hollow iron with pebbles inside, the Bison-horn Maria wears no special dancing dress; in fact he girds up his loin-cloth higher than usual and generally discards his singlet or 'waskat', so as to leave himself as free as possible for his antics, while the heavy drum that he carries slung from his right shoulder across his abdomen necessitates as much freedom as possible.

The women wear no special dancing dress, but put on every available ornament, and carry in their right hands *tirudi* or bamboo staves to which are fastened bunches of iron pellet-bells, shaped something like short but plump pea-pods, which they clash in time with the drums as they dance by striking their butts on the ground. Similar bells sometimes adorn the drum-stick with which the left hand of the male dancer beats the cowskin membrane at the left end of his drum.

411 The universal *vade mecum* of the Hill Marias is the knife or *kasyaq* carried tucked into the loin-cloth, with or without a wooden sheath. Of this, as of all weapons and tools used by Weapons and tools Hill or Bison-horn Marias, it has to be remembered that they are not always made by blacksmiths working exclusively for Marias, but often by blacksmiths in or near the bazaar villages of the plains who cater for Murias, Halbas and other tribes also. The most distinctive types are possibly, in the case of the Hill Marias, those made by the few blacksmiths living in their hills; but there are only slight differences, often of mere

2 [see cat. 116 pp. 44]

411 size, from those used in the plains. The plains blacksmith does
326 recognize the Hill Maria's individual taste in such matters, but that
taste is always being modified by the sight, occasional use and
occasional purchase of plains types, particularly if, when a new
weapon is wanted in a hurry, only the latter are immediately
available.

411 The blade of the average Maria knife measures 13 to 15 cm.
from the point to the beginning of the tang. It is about 2.5 cm.
broad where the tang begins, and from there the cutting edge curves
inwards for a quarter or a fifth of its length, thence tapering with
a slight convex curve to the point, which is 2 or 3 cm. to the side
of the axis of the handle. The reverse edge is about 3 mm. thick
in the tang, the thickness gradually diminishing towards the point.
The tang is a continuation of the thick side of the blade, about
8 mm. wide where it leaves the blade and tapering for about 3.5 or
4 cm. to a pointed end. Except where it is continued in this tang,
the blade has a horizontal bottom. The tang is heated and so
burned into the wooden handle; the blacksmith, with this as all
iron tools and weapons, supplies only the iron, and the buyer makes
his own handle. The edge is produced in the first place by hammer-
ing on each side, followed by rubbing down a whet-stone. Being
made of soft iron smelted from local ore, these knives can be given
an extremely sharp point and fine edge. They are not usually
[412] taken back to the smith to be sharpened, but are whetted on a
stone; there is often a flat, black, polished, communal whet-stone
outside the men's dormitory (*gotal*) in a hill village.

411 Besides fitting the tang into a short, cylindrical, wooden handle,
322 about 6.5 to 7.5 cm. long, and in diameter 2 cm. at the base and
somewhat thinner where the tang enters it, the Hill Maria makes
a wooden sheath of two flat pieces of wood trimmed roughly to the
shape of the blade, each of which has on one side a low flange
slightly more than half as thick as the thick edge of the blade.
The two flat pieces are laid on each other, the flanged edges together,
and are joined by whipping of twine, *kosa* silk or millimetre-wide
thin thongs of hide at the broad top, over a groove round the centre
of the sheath, and near its point. The sheath is often carved,
[537] favourite designs being rough lozenges in relief on a bar, or a bar
indented, or bands of three parallel lines.

411 This knife the Maria uses for slicing bamboo and all ordinary
cutting purposes; holding the handle loosely in his hand he uses
its full weight for chopping with the concave portion of the blade
pieces of wood up to 3 cm. in diameter, getting a surprisingly
straight cross-section; he usually chops all round the circumference
to a depth of a third of the diameter, then breaks off the portion to

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be severed, trimming the break with the knife held and used in the normal cutting position; he carves patterns in relief with the sharp point, or, holding the knife vertically, rolls the handle between the flat palms of his hand so as to drill holes with the point, trimming the edges of the holes with a burning ember. 411 ●

The Bison-horn Maria uses a similar knife, often much larger, and seldom with a sheath. His *banda* is like a dao, but it is really a glorified and enlarged knife, with a thick end, and sometimes a pronounced bend or angle in the centre of the cutting edge; he uses this for lopping thick saplings or bamboo culms. But the use of the *banda* is not universal, and may be borrowed from Parjas or other tribes to the east. Similar weapons, but socketed on to long shafts of bamboo, and known as *gagra*, are used by the northern Murias and Jhorias, occasionally by Hill Marias, as weapons of offence and defence or billhooks for bamboo and saplings; the ordinary *gagra* has a concavely curved edge and a point, the *chhuri gagra* a convex edge and no point, while the *dhala gagra* has an edge curving concavely from the top to a bend about half way along its length, and thence concavely to the socket. [77]

The Hill Maria calls his axe *maq'su*, which is the hill gutturalized version of the ordinary Gondi word *maras* used all over the Central Provinces. The Bison-horn Maria uses a totally different word for his axe of this shape, *godel*. The Halbi word is *tangya*. Like the Naga axe, the *maq'su* or *godel* is an iron blade, decidedly suggestive of a long stone celt in form¹; but unlike that axe, the butt of the blade ends in a socket for the haft, not in a tang inserted in a hole in the haft. The cutting edge of the blade among the Hill Marias seldom exceeds 7 cm. width, and 15 cm. is the maximum length of the blade from the cutting edge to the socket, which encloses a haft 4 or 5 cm. in diameter. It has a pronounced 'waist' just before the socket, but this is far more marked on the longer Muria *maras* than on *maq'su* or *godel*. The *godel* is usually rather more massive than the *maq'su*. The blacksmith, when giving an axe its first edge or a new edge to a blunt axe, heats the axe well in his forge, and thoroughly hammers the actual edge. He then heats it again, and hammers it flat on each side till he forms a new edge. He repeats the heating, and grinds down the edge by rubbing each side down a lump of stone. After a further slight heating he dips it in cold water to temper the edge, which is then ready for use. The haft is set at slightly less than a right-angle to the blade, the thick socket being wedged with a thin slip of wood. 412 326

A type of axe found still sometimes in the hill villages, where it is known as *pata endanna maq'su* (the song-and-dance axe, because 412 535

¹ Hutton, *Angami Nagas*, p. 65.

412 when the old men of to-day were young it was the decorated axe
535 carried by all Hill Maria men dancers), is similar to the *pharsi*
battle-axe of the plains tribes. The blade is crescent-shaped, the
concave being the cutting edge, and the convex outer edge being
socketed in the centre to receive the haft, which fits in the same
vertical plane as the cutting edge. I have seen one of these axes
measuring 41 cm. between the horns of the crescent.

411 The Hill Marias use small throwing spears made in one piece
of iron, of the same type as the much larger solid spears used by
the Murias of Amabera and north Kondagaon. They have leaf-
shaped but very long blades, shafts with a knob counterpoise and,
below the knob, spiked butts about a foot long. They are not
nowadays very skilled throwers, there being scarcely any game in
the hills. The thrower stands at a right incline to his target, and,
holding the spear by the point of balance, uses much the same action
as the javelin thrower of modern athletics.

411 The Bison-horn Maria uses a long and powerful stabbing spear
224 for killing the big game, including tiger and panther, that his
beaters drive into his nets. This is about 8½ to 9 feet (2.6 to 2.8
metres) long, and consists of an iron head socketed on to a long
bamboo shaft. The head consists of a blade about 30 cm. long and
7 cm. wide at the greatest width just above the shank, whence the
wings taper with a slight convexity to the point; a shank nearly
as long, slightly thinner where it leaves the blade than where it
ends in the socket; and a socket about 22 cm. long, generally with
one or more iron or brass rings which are forced down over the
socket from the shank when the shaft has been inserted, to tighten
the grip of the socket on the shaft. The socket below these rings
often forms a convenient grip for the right hand, when the huntsman
leans on his upright spear with his right upper arm extended
horizontally from his elbow, and the elbow bent for the hand to
grip the spear above the plane of the crown of the head. When the
quarry is netted, the spear has its point lowered to the front pointing
slightly downwards, the left arm is bent for the hand to grasp the
spear well below the socket, while the right hand grasps it about
a foot from the butt-end of the shaft, and the spearman sprints
forward and stabs the quarry with a smart two-handed downward
thrust.

411 The last weapons to be described are bows and arrows. The
Hill Marias call the bow *villa*, and the Bison-horn Marias *vile*;
the word, strictly speaking, means the stave only, the cord being
ha'undi in the former and *panti* in the latter language. The stave
is nearly always of bamboo, but the Bison-horn Marias, who
generally use more powerful weapons than the hill men, sometimes

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use very powerful staves of *dhaman* (*Grewia tiliaefolia*) wood, the 411 ●
bow when strung measuring 6 feet from horn to horn. Of the Hill
Maria staves measured by me, the thickest circumference varied
from 6.5 to 9 cm. All the bows which I have seen are plain bows,
used for spear-arrows and club-arrows; I have never seen any
compound, composite or pellet bows. The back of the stave is
the natural curved exterior of the bamboo; the belly is pared flat.
The string is a carefully sliced piece of the outside of a green bamboo 283
cut with a portion of the natural knots at each end trimmed into 24]
knobs, round which loops of twine¹ made from the fibre of the *siari*
(*Bauhinia vahlii*) creeper are tied in notches (*kiddi* in both dialects)
25 to 40 mm. from the tips of the horns. One loop is permanently
bound to the notch of the lower horn, the free loop being only
sprung into the upper notch when the bowman strings the bow by
resting the lower horn on the ground and bending the stave by
holding his knee in its belly and pulling the upper horn towards him.
The lower horn is called *modol* or *talla*, i.e. head, and the upper
horn *kodi* ('point') or *toqa* ('tail').

In the Abujhmar mountains the longest bowstring which I
measured was 135 cm. from notch to notch, and the shortest, a
child's bow, 110 cm. The greatest distance from the belly of the
stave to the string of a bow strung but not drawn was 10 cm.

Arrows are called *kandi* by the Hill and *kar* by the Bison-horn 411
Marias; this refers to spear-arrows only. *Kar* strictly means the 192
arrow-head, the Bison-horn Marias having no separate word
for the whole arrow. The other terms used are:—

Term	Hill Maria	Bison-horn Maria
Arrow-head	<i>kani</i>	<i>kar</i>
Barb	<i>kani</i>	<i>kani</i>
Shaft	<i>kani-meri</i>	<i>kani</i>
Shaft-nock	<i>kani</i>	<i>kani</i>
Feathering	<i>kani-koqosku</i>	<i>kani-goring</i>
Club-arrow	<i>beto</i>	<i>mitoni-kara</i>
Head of club-arrow	<i>bokka</i>	<i>miton</i>

The Hill Maria spear-arrows have a total length of 56 to 59 cm., 411
that of their club-arrows varying from 51 to 64 cm. The Bison-horn
arrows are longer in shaft and head, like their bows. Nos. 1, 2, 3 and
4, Figure 2, on page 86, are full-size representations of typical
Abujhmar arrow-heads. The wings curve convexly or concavely
from point to tips of barbs. The Bison-horn Maria arrows are
similar in shape, but are far larger, often measuring 15 cm. or more
from the point of the blade to the head of the tang, have longer
barbs, and are therefore slenderer in both blade and barb. All

¹ Used in the technical sense of the word.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949

AW32 Gond AW32

Hill Maria

Bison Horn Maria

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CHARACTERISTICS

411 spear arrow-heads have, whether seen from the obverse or the reverse, a groove in the thickness of the right wing starting deep between the tang and the barb, and becoming shallower as it tapers upwards to a point a little below the point of the blade. No. 2, Figure 2 below shows a bare arrow-head with typical pointed tang, which is heated and then worked like a gimlet into the head of the shaft almost to its full length. It is then pulled out of the hollowed



FIGURE 1

shaft, and melted lac, if available, is poured into the hollow as packing before the tang is finally re-inserted; a little piece of rag is used when lac is not to be had. The shaft is then whipped with *hosa* silk or thin strips of hide as shown in No. 1. The head of a typical club-arrow is shown in No. 3; it is a natural bamboo knot tapered with a knife from the natural thickness at SS' to that at PP'. The head of the shaft is fitted at PP' into the natural

a [see cat. 116, p. 420. - Analyst]

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hollow of the knot, and packed in one of the ways already explained. 411●
Club-arrows are used to kill small birds, and to teach boys to shoot.
The blacksmith will charge 1 anna or a pound of *kuthi* grain for
a spear arrow-head.

Both Hill and Bison-horn Marias use only peacock or peahen
tail-feathers to feather their arrows. No. 4. Figure 2, shows
the method. First the nock M is made by splitting the end of the
shaft and removing a little wood and pith; the nock and the shaft



FIGURE 3

are then whipped with horse silk or thin hide strips as far as the point
SS' inside the feathering. Seven or nine pieces of peafowl's brown
feather are then whipped by the quill around the shaft at X, so that
the trimmed edges of the feathers protrude fanwise from the shaft.
The quills are also tied round the shaft at SS' with cotton thread.

The release is shown in the drawing above. The bow is held
a little out of the perpendicular, the upper horn being canted a little

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to the marksman's right. He stands obliquely to his target, with feet slightly apart and body bending forward over the left hip. The nock in the arrow shaft is held to the string of the bow, in the Abujmar hills by the index and middle fingers only of the right hand unless the marksman is not strong enough not to use his third finger also; the Bison-horn Marias always use all three. The left thumb rests perpendicularly along the inner edge of the belly of the stave, the arrow resting, on the left of the stave, in the arch between the left thumb and index finger. The latter is laid lightly along the top of the shaft and pointed as a sight towards the target. The other left fingers are brought round the back of the stave. The string is then drawn to the rear by the right hand and released. No ring or other protector is worn on the thumb, though it is sometimes cut on the inner side a little above the knuckle.

Glasford, in para. 87 of his report, thus describes another form of release:—

All the Marias . . . often use the feet in bending the bow, while they pull the string with both hands. An arrow discharged in this manner, it is said, would almost pass through the body of a man or deer: this method is only had recourse to in elevated positions, such as from the tops of rocks, hills, and precipices, upon any object below.

Despite many enquiries, I never found a modern hill or plain Maria who could use this method. A few old men said it was used by wandering 'Nahal' hunters, now very rarely met in Bastar; none could remember it ever being used by Marias.

415 No quivers are used by any Marias. Arrows are carried in the hand, or by fixing the point of a barb in the hair-tuft, or in a cord tied round the head if bald.

534 No Marias appear ever to use a musical bow on a winnowing-fan over a pot of water as is done by low Hindu castes and Murias around Kondagaon for the *Tije* festival in the month of Bhadon.

171 The Hill Maria slays a very occasional panther or barking-deer with his bow, but is not a good shot. The Bison-horn Maria, on the other hand, is often a deadly shot up to forty or fifty yards. A young man in a village just below the Arampur pass, with a powerful bow of *dhaman* (*Grewia tiliaefolia*) wood at fifty paces range sent an arrow through the bullseye of a target which I set up for him against a *tendu* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*) tree; it penetrated 4 cm. into the very hard wood of that tree.

411 No other actual weapons are used by Marias, save for an occasional old sword of one of the traditional Indian *talwar* patterns which has survived the general disarming after the 1910 rebellion. But it is as well to describe here the few digging hand-tools used.

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Village Mother or the Departed. Bowmen are posted in advance, and they beat the game up to them. They share and share alike in the bag, no special limb being reserved for first arrow or first spear or anyone.

They all have bows, and arrows of varying sizes and shapes for every kind of living thing, but are not very expert in their use, save in the lower country where game still abounds. There is no bird and no animal that they will not shoot or trap and eat if they can get it.

But in most of their country the only creatures that they can trap are hare, jungle-fowl and pea-fowl. A sure sign of the nearness of a Hill Maria village is the presence of numerous hare-traps (*moral-gada*) by the side of a path. A small oval of ground is cleared of growth and surrounded either with small boulders or with sticks driven into the ground, and about eighteen inches above it. A passage is left unfenced at each narrow end of the oval wide enough for a hare to enter by one and go out by the other without turning round. The trapper urinates in the oval, and it is a considerate act for any passer-by to do so; in some villages a common urinal pot is kept by the dormitory for use at night, and the urine is divided in the morning between the hare-trappers. The ground inside the oval is soon impregnated by the salt, and hares begin, therefore, to frequent it. When this is known from the droppings which they leave there, the inner passage is blocked up with sticks or boulders, and behind it a bamboo is fixed in the ground to serve as a spring. Two strings are tied to the top of the bamboo, one for the release trigger of the trap, and the other passed through a hollow bamboo tube four or five inches long, to end in a running noose. The release-trigger is a length of thin bamboo stick which is laid more or less horizontally across the oval, one end resting lightly against the inside of one wall of the trap, and the other placed under the 'tap' of a bamboo stick fastened in the ground by the opposite wall of the trap; the 'tap' is a short length of stick branching downwards from the main stick. The tap stick is called *din-kala*.² The noose is looped over the entrance to the trap, the bamboo tube being hung on one of the wall sticks or rested on one of the boulders. The hare enters through the noose to get his salt, dislodges the release trigger from the side of the wall opposite the tap stick, and so releases the spring. As this flies up, the bamboo tube slides down the other string towards the noose and helps to tighten it around the hare.

Pitfalls covered lightly with earth and leaves on criss-crossed sticks, and with spears or bamboo spikes planted in the bottom,

² *Din* means penis.

224 they must be loose enough to fall on any animal driven into them by the beaters and entangle it. Some twenty paces behind the nets the Marias make little shelters of leaves, about fifteen yards apart, carefully camouflaged from the front, and in these shelters groups of four or five spearmen stand motionless. They do not move till an animal is clearly entangled in the net, but then there is a rush of men to have the honour of the first spear. The first man stabs and holds the animal down with his spear, while the others blood their spears. He gets as his portion the off hind leg from buttock to hough, the headman gets the saddle, and the *waddai* or clan-priest the liver, the portion usually given to the Departed. At Koilibera I saw deer, four-horned antelope and a panther netted in this way and duly dispatched. On the last day a tiger, shot at but missed twice from the *machans* in front, hurled itself at full gallop into the net twenty yards to the right front of the shelter where I was standing with a group of spearmen. It fell headlong, and the net fell on to it according to rule; but unfortunately at that point the rope meshes were old and brittle, and the ground rocky and grassless; the tiger's weight and speed smashed the retaining rope and burst a hole through the net. There was a brief vision of a mighty forearm sweeping aside the encumbrance, and the tiger was free; he rushed roaring by the side of the next clump of spearmen, so close that they could have touched him. Wisely all stood stock still from the moment when the tiger entered the net till it had passed them; but then one of the guns from a back *machan* not so wisely fired over the heads of the line of spearmen. Whether he hit the tiger or not, he enraged it, and it swung round to charge. Those of us on the ground with rifles could not fire at first because the tiger was not clear of the line of spearmen; but a rain of rather wild bullets, one of which broke the tiger's near forearm, checked him, and Kalmu Boda gave it the *coup de grâce* (possibly saving more than one life) by hitting it in the neck with a contractile bullet fired from an ancient twelve-bore gun, rusty and uncoiled, with barrels patched with rough iron bands and held together with wire, and as loose in the breech and stock as a gun could be. The bullet killed the tiger outright. Boda had missed twice and misfired once before the final shot. The Murias and Marias present drummed the tiger back to camp with their usual anapaestic rhythm, and the Marias broke into a dance, advancing and retreating before the dead tiger to the same anapaestic drumbeats.

The Bison-horn Maria is an adept at nets and snares of all kinds and sizes for all manner of game. Kalmu Boda has recipes for poisoning tiger and other game. For poisoning arrows they use occasionally the crushed seeds of the *Abrus precatorius* shrub;

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the seeds are small, shiny and scarlet, with black eyes, and are used as beads in Bastar and many parts of the Central Provinces. For poisoning tiger they 'salt' the flesh of a kill with the poisonous leaves, bark and roots of the shrub *dual bito* (Halbi *dag mohra*; *Alstonia nervifolia*) mixed with quicklime. 411 ●
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[224]

C. Domestication of Animals

Pork is a major item in the dietary of Hill and Bison-horn Marias. At the end of marches in the Abujhmar hills I always paid for a pig for the carriers from the preceding camp to roast and eat before dispersing to their villages; and it is sound to provide the Marias or Murias called out for any State work with pork at the beginning and end of the work. The best fattened hog¹ is very cheap and goes a long way. The housing and feeding of pigs have already been described²; cared for in this way, even the domestic India pig is not necessarily the foul worm-ridden pest that he becomes in the low caste quarters of the towns and villages of British India, and in fact in Abujhmar villages his quarters are often cleaner than the houses. 262
231

Nearly all young boars are gelded, but a few are left entire for sacrifices in honour of the clan-god and the Village Mother to whom neither Hill nor Bison-horn Maria would offer a hog. The Hill Maria lays the boar on its back, ties its front legs to a post, and stretches out its back legs, while another draws out its penis (*din*) and crushes its testicles (*merrakeng*) with stones. They say that gelding improves the flavour of pork, and the only boars ever eaten are those sacrificed. A hog is always part of the Hill Maria bride-price. Hill Marias call a hog *badiali padi* or *kuna padi*, and Bison-horn *badiali padi*; boars they respectively call *charhal padi* and *kural padi*. 232
[583]

Cooked pig's lard is kept in many Hill Maria houses as a salve for sore eyes and cuts. 757

They keep numbers of poultry similar in breed and appearance to the red jungle fowl. The Hill Maria's hen-coops have been described on page 104. Cocks and hens are taken to the field houses, and roost there below the sleeping platforms. *Korr-guda*, funnel-shaped nests on bamboo posts about two feet high, are kept in every Hill Maria house, and by many Bison-horn Marias. Jungle cock visit the *penda* plots and fight the domestic cocks in the early morning; the Hill Marias say that if a jungle cock crosses a domestic hen the eggs are not fertile. 235

¹ 'Hog' is used in its technical sense, of a gelded boar.

² See pp. 103 and 120.

Oil for anointing the bride and bridegroom in marriage and for the hair and body for toilet purposes is made from the mahua seed or indeed from any of the oils used in cooking. 252
[302]

The method of extracting oil from the mahua seed is as follows. A pot of water is placed on a fire near the oil-press and heated. Then into a bamboo cone, exactly like the *jib* in which rice-beer is prepared, is put the ground and dried seed. Covered with a small basket this is placed above the water-pot and the seed is steamed for about fifteen minutes. The steamed oil-seed is then tipped out into a small basket called *kora* and the operator presses it down with a rice-husker. When this small basket is full of closely pressed oil-seed, it is carried over to the press. This is called *garomat*,¹ and is of a very primitive kind. A long forked branch is inserted into a hole made in a living tree about two feet above the ground. Underneath is placed the *garatole*, a block of wood with lines carved on its upper surface to carry off the oil. The basket of oil-seed is placed on top of this and the bough is laid upon it. The women place large stones on the forked end of the bough, thus forming a heavy weight to press down the seed. In the fork is a peg to keep it in position. After about half an hour the oil begins to flow and drips down into an earthen pot below.

This work is generally done by women, often by the *motiari*. In Masora I once saw two *motiari* extracting oil from the seeds of the *kenti* tree. These girls fetched the seed from the jungle, broke it up with their feet, ground it, steamed it and then put it into the press. They said that the *chelik* had no oil for their hair and they were doing this, entirely on their own, to please them.

VIII. HUNTING

The Muria will eat almost anything. They profess to despise the Maria 262
I once saw two *motiari* extracting oil from the seeds of the *kenti* tree. These girls fetched the seed from the jungle, broke it up with their feet, ground it, steamed it and then put it into the press. They said that the *chelik* had no oil for their hair and they were doing this, entirely on their own, to please them.



[41]●

FIG. 7. Characteristic Muria bow
Length 3' 4"

in the hills and stripped the whole forest of red ants. But near Jungani I saw a monkey's skin hanging up in a house and the people admitted that 'the children had eaten it'.² Crocodile is not disliked; after the skin is removed, the flesh, which is a little coarse, can yet be cooked and eaten

¹ This press resembles that reported as used in Assam and by the Korku.—K. P. Chattopadhyaya, 'Indian Oil Presses,' *Journal of the Indian Anthropological Institute*, Vol. I (1938), p. 43.

² Mon-hara Maria say that 'though its skin is black, the monkey's flesh is white as rice-beer'. They often roast the monkey in its skin and eat everything. If a man eats a monkey's placenta he will be as active as a monkey and able to jump from tree to tree. It is said that Kodaya Peda's great-grandfather did this. The Waddal and Gaita of Dual-karka (and perhaps other villages) do not eat the flesh because the monkey helps them in their priestly duties—an obvious reference to Hanuman.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

262 in the ordinary way. Rats are a very popular item of diet and so are nearly all wild animals, though tiger-flesh is not usually taken.

825 The Muria, especially those living in the east of Kondagaon, where there is still a wonderful supply of game, have a good knowledge of the habits of animals and birds, both practical and fanciful. The tiger and bear appear frequently in folk-tales and songs. Of birds there are many stories. It is curious that [152] the Muria attribute to such birds as the quail and the crane habits of jealousy which are strikingly absent from their own women. The female quail is believed to be possessed by the fear that her husband will be going to other women and is always calling *gudur gudur*. When she lays eggs, 'she makes him sit on them or he might go to other women forgetting his own children'. The female crane also calls her husband with the cry *tarank tarank*. When she lays her eggs in a hollow tree, 'in order to prevent him going after other women while she is hatching them, she makes him sit on them himself and closes the opening of the hollow with mud except for a



FIG. 8. Pellet-bow
Length 5'

little hole through which she feeds him'. The titur got its name and its cry when at a human marriage the Belosa in charge of all arrangements found she had lost her clitoris (*tita*). As she was looking for it, she met the bird and borrowed one from her. She promised to return it but never did so, and so now the bird is always saying '*Tita de*', 'Give me my clitoris'. The golden oriole's cry is imitated by the *chelik* as *peking pude*, *peking pude* or 'girl's vagina, girl's vagina' and *motiari* are said to get very embarrassed when they hear it. The *gandachirai*, or Greater Indian Night-jar, is supposed to call *tuk-tuk tuk tuk-tuk tuk* which resembles the noise *tukrus tukrus* of the Ganda's shuttle as he weaves his cloth. The *chelik* believe that if they can guess the name of the tree on which the bird is sitting, the thread will break. They call out the names of all the trees they can think of and when the bird falls silent they say they have guessed the right tree and the weaver's thread has snapped.

[26] The Muria have ideas about the hare: it comes from the moon; it never drinks water, but only dew; in the rains it catches the falling water. If a man sees the hare in the moon move, he will get a fit. During the last famine, some Muria kept themselves alive on hare's turd, and even now they eat it, cooked into a soup, for it is considered nourishing and medicinal.

Before there was sun and moon it was by the peacock's cry that men knew the time, and still today the bird calls *Eh ho eh ho mane*, so that all who live in Nadumbhum (the Middle World) know that evening has come. When it cries in the dark, they know that dawn is breaking.

224
411 For hunting, the Muria's chief weapon is still the bow and arrow, though some of them have old guns which they regard with great reverence and often call by special names like *Maoligundi*.¹ Spears are used and pellet-bows,

¹ Old guns are worshipped by the Maharaja at the Dussera festival in Jagdalpur.

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

and for killing small birds there is the club-arrow. The Muria do not seem to know the *angrim*, the three- or four-pointed wooden arrow used by the Bison-horn Maria for killing snakes and rats.

The Muria use traps extensively. Sometimes they dig a deep pit on a path where they have seen the tracks of animals, cover it with grass and then drive the game towards it. If any animal falls in, they beat it to death with clubs. They hunt the mongoose with dogs. For catching crocodiles, they make a noose with a slip-knot and attach it by a cord to a tree by the river. For a porcupine, 'the old woman bringing her load of fuel from the hill', they make what they call a *thongera* trap, a cage of wood with a heavy block suspended above which, when the animal releases it by treading on a bit of bamboo below, falls down and crushes it. Similar fall-traps are used to catch small leopards and panthers. For larger animals they also use a trap with a door. The trap is divided into two parts. It looks rather like a pigsty, and a pig is actually kept as bait in an inner room carefully shut off from the main trap. When the leopard enters, it dashes towards the pig and so treads on an ingenious arrangement of bamboo and cords which releases a string attached to a long pole balanced above. At the other end of the pole hangs the door, which then slides down and the animal is caught. Of these traps, the Muria riddle—'The horse is kicking its feet in someone else's shed' and 'The Manjhi dies eating, eating' (*Tinjor tinjor hāyna mānjhi*).

Spring-traps, called in Gondī *ahachār*, corresponding to the Hindi *thonga*, are made to catch rabbits. A long bamboo is bent over and attached to the ground by a cord ending in a noose, inside which rice or other food is sprinkled. When the hare goes to eat, it releases the catch, the bamboo springs into the air and the unlucky creature is caught in the noose.

Bird-line is used to catch birds and ingenious arrangements of nooses set in bamboo frames are set over a nest or on a path known to be used by birds. To catch the Goggle-eyed Plover, for example, the Muria make a line of ashes across a path with a small bamboo loop and a noose in the middle. The bird avoids the ashes and makes for the loop and so is caught.

I have noticed in several places that traps are set in or near the burial ground. There was a rat-trap under the shadow of the menhirs at Baghera. At Markabera, a leopard-trap was only a few yards from the memorial stones. At Magheda I saw an ingenious peacock-trap in the graveyard. A small hole in the ground was filled with grain. A noose was laid round it and hidden with earth; the end of the cord was held by a man concealed in a hide some distance off. When the peacock came to eat, he jerked the cord and caught it.

While the individual Muria is a keen hunter all the year round, whole villages go out for ceremonial hunts before the greater festivals. Hunting is almost a religious exercise and is very sensitive to magic; in Almer the *chelik* hunted every day for a month without success, although the neighbouring villages got plenty of game, as a result of a sorcerer's enchantments. Such



FIG. 9. Powder-pouch of gaur
horn covered with chital antelope
Half actual size

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

menstruous women. When the hunters go out into the jungle they must not walk across the footprints of such a woman nor should they see her shadow or cross it. They often suppose, when a hunt is a complete failure, that they must have walked across the footprints of a menstruous woman as they were going out. In Benur, Damsa Muria walked over the shadow of such a woman as he was going to the jungle. Soon afterwards he saw a sam-bhar, but as he was taking aim his bow broke and he got a swelling on his body. He went home, and when the Siraha had diagnosed the cause of the trouble, he made offerings to Kadrengal and the jungle dogs and so recovered.

Should a woman enter her period during the absence of her husband on a hunt, he ought to return home, or if he does accompany the party he must not go near any traps or across the tracks of any animal; nor should he carry the animal when it is killed nor, since Kadrengal and the Departed live in them, should he hold a bow and arrow or a gun.

Adultery on the part of one of the hunters' wives also can ruin a hunt. This has happened in Remawand, in Bandopal, Chani-yagaon and no doubt in other places. The hunter not only loses the game but falls ill, and many kinds of misfortune befall his household; his cattle die and the outraged Dead withdraw their protection.

There are many songs about hunting, sung during the Hulki dances and in the ghotul.

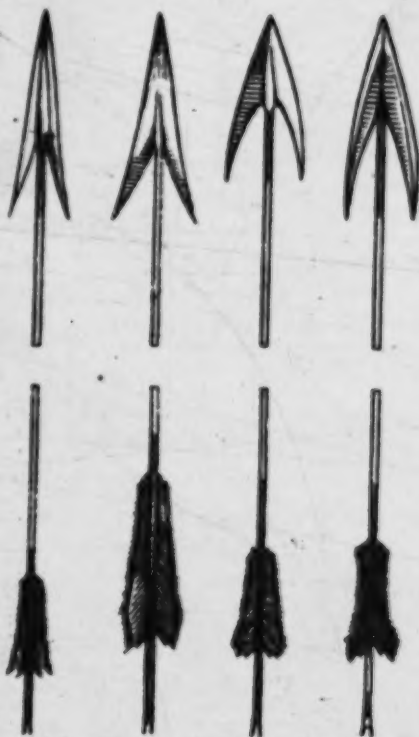


FIG. 10. Arrows and arrow-heads
Length 5'

*Chikhal mālī kariya māma hāri-
gā hārigā shikāri shikāri!*
Tepak aḍya hīma māma.
Māli gāndī tūpā māma.

Gopā hēva tōx māma.

O the mud of the salt-lick, uncle shikari!

Make your gun ready, uncle shikari.
The name of the gun is Maligondi,
uncle shikari.

Make gunpowder with gum from the
mode tree, uncle shikari.

● 411

Plate XV



Chetk with
bow and
arrow



Returning
from the
ceremonial
hunt

[p. 60 (A)]

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

614 There are other clans which I have not been able to fit into the scheme of
 615 phratries—the Hurra clan with its clan-god Lingo Mudial at Semurgaon, the
 Karati with its *dhum* at Phunder, the Vetti which has the lizard as its totem
 and the Kodovetti which has the mongoose. These, of course, fit into the
 scheme of *akomāma* and *dādābhai* relationships of their own neighbour-
 hood.

There are not many songs about the clans. I give one Jhoria Pata from Sirpuri.

Those who kindle fire in the field are boys of the Uika clan.

How strong the Uika boys are!

Those who make a hearth with brinjals from the Panara's house are boys of the Maravi clan.

Those who sit on a gate and call it a horse are boys of the Maravi clan.

How strong the Maravi boys are!

Those who build a hearth of pig's droppings are boys of the Halami clan.

Those who sit to clean their teeth with a twig are boys of the Halami clan.

How strong the Halami boys are!

Those who blow the buffalo horn are boys of the Halami clan.

Those who throw fine rice on the road are boys of the Halami clan.

How strong the Halami boys are!



FIG. 15. Decorated
Muria knife
Length 1' 5"

II. THE ORIGIN OF THE CLANS

614 Many of the clans derive their origin from some historic journey in the
 course of which a river had to be crossed. Others have local and special reasons
 for their origin.

This legend of crossing a river is known throughout central India. Many Gond, Baiga and Agarika trace their clans and the attachment of those clans to certain totems from this.¹ In Muria mythology we are sometimes told

¹ Compare, for such tales in the Central Provinces alone, Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 61ff.; Grignon, op. cit., p. 241; C. G. C. Trench, *Grammar of Gond* (Madras, 1919), Vol. II, pp. 88f.; Elwin, *The Agarika*, p. 75; M. P. Buradkar, 'Totemism among the Gonds', *Man in India*, Vol. XX (1940), pp. 120 and 277f.; *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Part III B, p. 77 (the Gond emigrating from Phuljhar cross the Gondki river in flood).

Plat XLIV



The Hikni strings his bow
in the ceremonial hunt



The Almer Gaita worships
axe, bow and arrows
before a hunt

[p. 208(B)]

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

527 is present but not obtruded. The Kondagaon Marhai lasts four or five days, but only on one of these is there any serious spiritual business. Then clan-

gods from the surrounding villages attend, scores of Siraha fall into ecstasy, and a great procession goes round the booths of the fair. In the Muria country, similar Marhai are held in Keskal, Narayanpur and Antagarh.

Dassera is a national festival. If the Marhai corresponds to St Giles Fair or the Lord Mayor's Procession, Dassera is for the people of Bastar the King's Birthday, the Aldershot Tattoo and Primrose Day combined. Pargana headmen from all over the State assemble at Jagdalpur to pay tribute to the Maharaja and attend the Muria Darbar. The ceremonies last a fortnight and the aboriginals play a major part in them; among other things they kidnap the Maharaja and have the right to pull his ceremonial car. Central in the Dassera ritual is the royal worship of Danteshwari: her priest and litter come all the way from Dantewara; and no Muria who sees the regal attention the goddess receives at Jagdalpur but wants to introduce her to a shrine in his own village.

The great Jatra may be classified as tribal festivals. These are the religious pilgrimages to the shrines of the clan-gods and to notable gods in

celebrated temples. They are sometimes celebrated annually and sometimes every three years. They are very great and exciting occasions; gods are brought by their devotees from surrounding villages; hundreds of chelik and motiari come to dance; and scores of Siraha enliven the scene by their antics. In villages where there is no clan-god, there is usually a small Deo-jatra, an assembly of the villagers to do honour to the local gods. These are brought out of their shrines, bathed, exercised and worshipped. Such ceremonies often occur shortly before the Wijja Pandum in April or May.

796 I have already given an outline of the agricultural festivals which, with the festivals of the clan-gods, are the most important events of the year. All these festivals are of the same pattern; at one the first pulses are eaten; at another the freshly reaped millets; at a third mangoes and other fruits. It will be sufficient, therefore, to describe in detail one of these celebrations, and I will now give an account of the Marka Pandum, or the ceremonial eating of the first mangoes of the year, which I saw at Masora on 17 April 1941. This feast is preceded by a ceremonial hunt. I missed this at Masora, arriving only in time to see the chelik return with a fine hare slung over a boy's shoulder.



FIG. 31. Axes of a type used to kill sacrificial animals

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

796 As they did so they all yelled at the animals, 'Don't trouble us or we'll give you nothing next time'. One pig refused to eat—it had been offered as a fine: the donor's wife was a witch—and this showed the enormity of the offence which it was expected to condone. But the people did not take it back; they cried, 'We offered it willingly, but you refused, yet we give it all the same'. One man asked for a son, but they shouted to the gods, 'No, give him a daughter'.

• [411]



[531]



FIG. 32. Muria knife and sheath, of a type often used in sacrifice

796 After the animals had been fed, the priest offered three brass rings for three men who had died during the past year, saying 'Let them now be mingled with the Departed'. Then the animals were killed. The priest put his knife upright between the toes of his right foot, plucked some of the feathers, cut off the head of the chick and sprinkled the blood over the rice and the gods. He killed the pigs by holding them down firmly and sawing off the heads, which he placed facing outwards before the line of rice. As the first pig was killed the worshippers stood with folded hands crying, 'Let the village folk be well; let there be good crops this year; let our animals, cows, pigs, goats and hens be well'. As they killed the second pig, they cried, 'Though it didn't eat, show whether you accept it or no'. They watched eagerly to see how many times the automatic action of the muscles would open the mouth of the decapitated head. Slowly the mouth opened and shut three times and the people were pleased, for this was a sign that the penalty pig had been accepted and all was well.

Similar offerings were made to all the gods, or at least a little blood was sprinkled on them. After a pause, the priest offered the mango, char and karmata fruits, cutting them in half, and removing the stones.

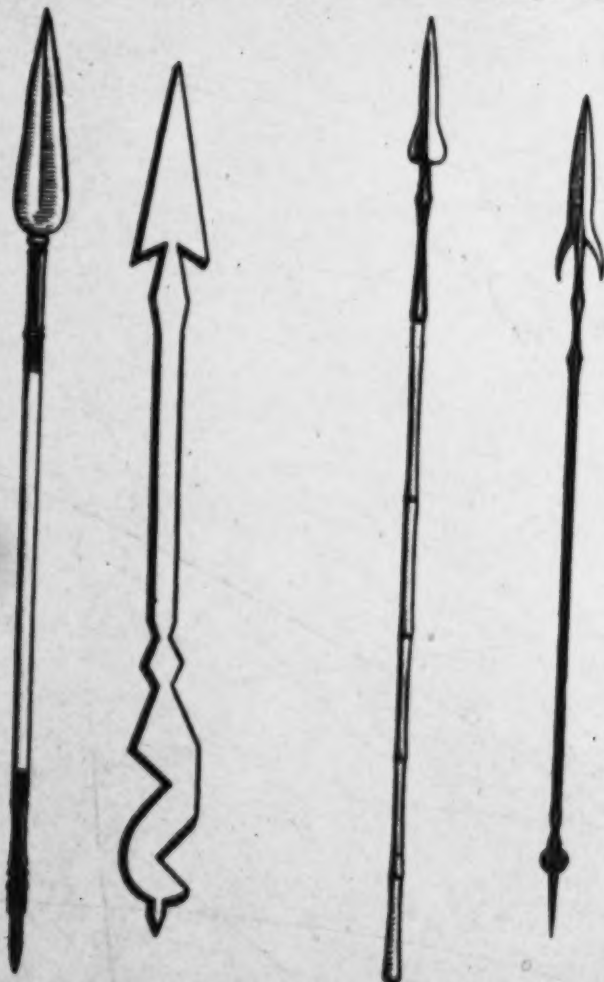
796 Now the women and motiani approached and the Anga went dancing to meet them. He stood before them, and they offered him liquor—'When a Gondi god drinks even one cup of liquor, he talks and dances very well', said one of my guides. Then the chelik picked up their big dhol drums and danced in a long straight line, shuffling to and fro, drumming very vigorously and crying loudly as they changed their direction. The women and girls also danced in a line, and all the Siraha-mediums began to throw themselves about and play and dance, generally carrying one of the gods in their hands. A Naitami boy had come to the wrong place and he picked up the Gotal Lala and was dancing with it. But the Poyami people resented this, and took it from him with loud abuse.

The dancing, drumming and drinking continued till sundown, when the meat with the fruit and rice was cooked. Then the people—men and women—

GHOTUL DISCIPLINE

In the first week of November, 1940, the older boys of the Masora ghotul were away watching the field-crops and the Chalan was in charge. For several

883^x
861



[411]•

FIG. 106. The ghotul Kotwar's
wooden spears
Lengths 6' 1" and 5' 1"

FIG. 107. Iron spears used
by the chelik in hunting
Lengths 6' 6" and 5' 5"

days five of the girls—Belosa, Tiloka, Piosa, Janka and Aloa—had reported to him that they too were going to watch the crops. Actually, however, they went to sleep at home. Probably they found the ghotul dull without

GAMES

flying in the wind. Two had bows and arrows; two were magicians with winnowing-fan and measuring-sticks to discover by divination where their quarry was; one imitated a dog with a bell on his neck; and there was an old man carrying a pot and a basket to take the meat home.

The party chased the gaur round and round the field. Sometimes they lost it, and then the magicians sat down, fell into trance, measured their sticks, and shook the winnowing-fan. The dog ran round with his nose to the ground; it was a great joke to beat and kick him. After a time they shot the gaur and it rolled over on the ground. The hunters ran to it, patted, stroked, embraced it, congratulated each other; they danced round and round with delight. It was a charming scene and reminded one of the passion for the chase that still dominates the heart of every Muria. The dog fell upon the gaur and began to eat it; it had to be beaten off. Then the magicians ordered the party to pick up the great animal and carry it to a stream where they would cut it up and eat it. But the gaur came to life and chased them away.

In Kuntpadar, the magicians blew into the sambhar's ear to see if it was alive or not. The magicians there were very lively, turning somersaults and shaking their heads in trance. At Palli (Kondagaon) there was an interesting variation. One of the boys—practically naked save for a scrap round his loins—represented the *jiva* or soul of the gaur. When the animal was injured and lay dying on the ground, its soul came to perform a strange and uncanny dance above and round the body. The boy contorted himself like a wounded worm and twisted and turned in the strangest manner. At last it fell on the body, a sign that the life had after all returned, and the gaur got to its feet and ran away.



FIG. 145. Sling used in hunting

In other villages I have seen this game take another form. A boy plays the part of cowherd and takes the boys (bulls and bullocks) and girls (cows) out to graze in the jungle. They crawl along pretending to nibble grass and roots. Then the tiger or leopard appears: in Puppaoon he was an almost naked boy whose body was covered with stripes and stars made by applying white earth and charcoal with the splayed end of a castor twig; in Kuntpadar and Markabera I saw a tiger made by tying a boy round and round with strips of bark to represent the stripes, and a large cloth round the head. The tiger

THE BISON-HORN MARIA

15

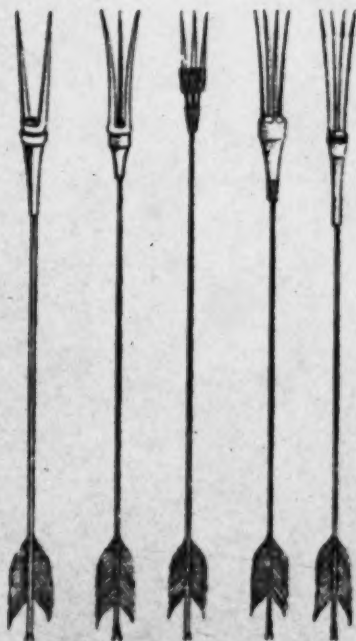
224 The older people are keen hunters and trappers, though much of the game has disappeared. Simple thorn-traps are placed round the mahua trees to catch bats, and more substantial snares are set for birds, hares and larger animals. Before the great Seed Festival at the end of the hot weather, there [796 is a ceremonial hunt at which bows and arrows are worshipped 787] and all the able-bodied men go out to get what game they can, their success or otherwise being regarded as an omen for the coming harvest.

226 The Maria fish with nets and traps, by baling out water 262 from pools or by poisoning the streams. Small fish, prawns, crabs and frogs are very popular roasted with spices and taken with the refreshing juice of the toddy or sago palms.

411 The tools and weapons of the Maria naturally figure frequently in their acts of violence. The most common imple-

ment of murder is the ordinary *godel* axe which corresponds to the *tangia* in universal use throughout central India. The Maria also use, chiefly for ceremonial purposes, a *pharsi* battle-axe with a crescent blade.

The *banda* or *gagra* is the Maria dao. The *banda* is a large knife with a broad end and rather a short handle used to cut bamboos and young trees. The *gagra* has a much longer handle and sometimes a point and a curved blade. It is not only very useful in the forest; it is a powerful weapon of assault. No spears feature in any of the murders described



Engram arrows
(Length about 3')

- 411 in this book, but the Maria have a fine spear used for stabbing. Bows and arrows are not unlike those in use elsewhere. The arrows are either pointed or clubbed. Pellet bows are used for killing birds, as is the *engram*, the many-pointed wooden arrow which is illustrated here. The pointed iron arrow is that employed in most of the murders by shooting or stabbing. But the *engram* was used in one or two cases.
- 412 Implements of domestic use include the heavy rice-husker which is so constantly in the hands of the women. With this Oyami Masa in a fit of rage battered his cousin to death at Jabeli.¹ The Bison-horn Maria hoe (*koriki*) is similar to that common in the plains, and a man once used it to kill his mother in a fit of drunkenness.²
- 283 The Maria have no subsidiary industries worth the name.
- 286 Spinning and weaving is taboo to them, though they are allowed to spin rope from hemp and grass. They make
- 285 baskets of leaves and bamboo, but mostly for their own domestic use. They are expert at making mats, which they either weave with grass and reeds on a frame or plait with bamboo slats. The Maria do their own ironwork and do it
- 326 well, for there is a plentiful supply of excellent ore. Those
- 565 Maria who take to smelting and blacksmithery are regarded as inferior by the others who generally do not inter-marry or eat with them. This rule is not, however, absolute and in other ways the Maria blacksmiths live as members of the tribe, join their dances and festivals and share the common life. For statistical purposes I have included the Maria blacksmiths among the other Maria in this book.

III

- 771 The religion of the Maria centres round the Earth, the¹ State and the Clan. The Earth is the ultimate source of life and is personified in the Village Mother. The State is represented by Danteshwari, the tutelary goddess of the royal family: she is now sometimes identified with the Earth Mother or the Village Mother, but she often has a shrine or at least an image of her own, and her cult is rapidly increasing in popularity.
- 771 Developing out of the cult of the earth is the worship of
- 776 the clan-god. The traditional theory is that every clan is
- 614

¹ Case No 62.² Case No 72.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943

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Bison Horn Maria

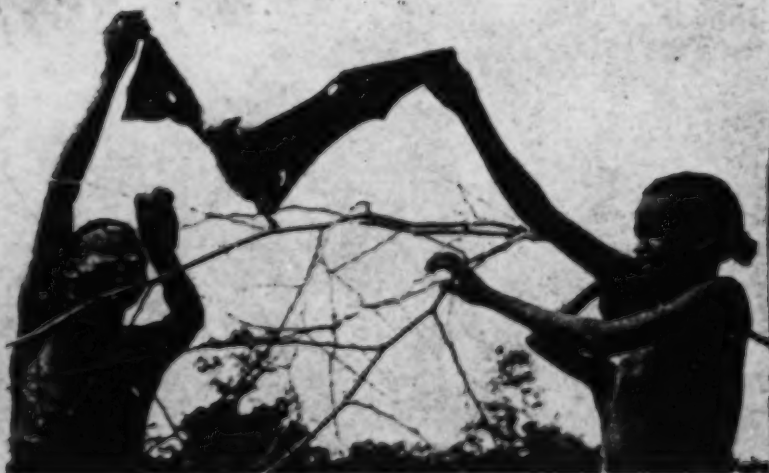
411
302
301



Dalha of Gadapal with bow and arrow

Boys catching a bat at Khutepal

224
302



[Facing p. 49]

⁷⁶⁴ of the family, said that he would take all responsibility and ⁷⁶² that he had already prepared the woman by making her drunk.

When it became dark Bote picked up her axe and crowbar, and at last insisted on going home. Guddi said that, as it was dark, he would go with her for part of the way. He took a knife and an axe and persuaded Nari to accompany them. After they had gone some two hundred and fifty yards, Guddi caught hold of the woman and when she began to scream, pressed her throat to silence her. The two men then dragged her about half a mile to the tank. They took her into the water and Guddi pushed her head under and held her there until she was drowned. He then cut open her belly with his knife, half removed the foetus and slit its neck. Nari's nerve seems to have failed him at this point and he ran away home.

Shortly after Nari's return Bote's husband came with a party of neighbours searching for her. He asked Nari if his wife had been there, and he said she had not. Very late at night Guddi returned. His wife asked him where he had been, and he beat her. In spite of his late night, however, Guddi got up very early before dawn, and abused his nephews Hirma and Rainu for over-sleeping. He told them to get up quickly and plough the field by the tank. He went ahead with his bullocks, and the two boys and Nari followed. After ploughing for a little while, Guddi left his bullocks and took the others to the tank. There he showed them the body of Bote floating in the water, and told them that he had killed her as a sacrifice. He pulled the corpse to the bank, and the others saw how the belly had been cut and the foetus partly pulled out and its neck slit. Guddi then persuaded the others to help him carry the corpse to a place nearby called Ital Lata where there was thick undergrowth. That night the four men went again and took the corpse to a hillside in the



Maria knife
(Length of
blade 10")

⁶⁷⁴an undesirable proximity to her lover, and go to live elsewhere. This, however, she refused to do.

It is very difficult to discover what really happened on the night of the festival, for everybody was drunk on rice-beer. Several different versions of the incident were given. It seems probable that early in the evening Panda found his wife standing in the courtyard and slapped her; perhaps he suspected that she was looking for her lover. Nanda saw what happened and told Panda not to hit his wife, for the child she was holding in her arms might fall down and be injured. A little later, Panda wanted to get a bamboo tube to keep his tobacco in. He started to cut a bit from a pole on which bunches of maize were hanging. Nanda again interfered and told him not to cut it, for the maize would fall down. Panda took no notice and went on cutting the bamboo. Nanda then lost his temper, and told him that he was a very quarrelsome person and no one could live with him. He suggested that he should go away to another village and live with his brother. At this Panda retorted that the real reason why Nanda wanted him to go away was because he was in love with Hirne.

There was no violence in the quarrel at this point, and Nanda went away to his own house in the same compound. Hirne was making leaf-cups in her father's house, and later—it was dark and everyone was drunk—Nanda seems to have taken the opportunity of slipping into the room and embracing her. Suddenly Panda entered, and finding his wife and her lover together—he claims that they were actually enjoying sexual intercourse—he lost all control of himself, picked up an axe and killed his rival.

Hemla Gunda was the Dhurwa or clan-priest of the Hemla clan-god. He was also a well-known medicine-man and, although he was excommunicated for reasons that will



Godel axe